

Trooper Sperr also traveled to Louisiana this past fall in Hurricane Katrina and helped those folks in that area, neighbors.

Madam Speaker, as a former judge in Texas, I have had the opportunity to speak several times in New York and to the troopers at the New York State Police Academy in Albany, New York. After we got through the language barrier, I found these right-thinking Americans to be passionate about protecting the citizens of New York State and bringing outlaws to justice.

Trooper Andrew Sperr was proud to be a member of this group of law officers. Trooper Andrew Sperr died doing what he wanted to do, protecting, serving and defending the people. As thousands of his fellow State troopers, law enforcement personnel, friends and family, mourn his loss, our prayers go out to his family for allowing his life to be sacrificed for the rest of us.

Andrew J. Sperr was a dedicated officer and a compassionate friend to all. He served with distinction and honor, and he will be missed. America and Americans were better because of the life of Andrew Sperr. He wore the badge and proudly took the oath to protect and serve.

Madam Speaker, peace officers are the last strand of wire in the fence between safety and anarchy. They are all that stands between the people and the barbarians. Trooper Andrew Sperr died protecting the rest of us from those outlaws.

So God bless those that wear the badge of the American peace officer. That's just the way it is.

PORT SECURITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Madam Speaker, many Americans are breathing a sigh of relief. They believe we have resolved the issue of port security, but that is far from the truth. True, for now, the idea of United Arab Emirates operating some of our port terminals has abated. But this is very much just a very small issue regarding port security.

The fact is, our ports are probably today very little less secure than pre-9/11. The grades that the 9/11 Commission give to this administration's efforts on port security were generally failing.

The United States has bound itself to an international agreement through the International Maritime Organization that allowed secret ownership of ships. Osama bin Laden could have a fleet of his own. We are not allowed to know. They fly under flags that countries that provide no supervision, in fact, in the case of Liberia, until recently, didn't even have a government, and barely exist.

They have crews of unknown identity. Yes, they send us a name about the ship lands, but is that really the person. Is that really the background.

Do we have fingerprints? No. We don't know who the people are on those ships. The cargo on those ships is not secure. The containers are not secure. It would cost a few dollars to secure a container from loading to unloading in the United States of America and scan it. The Bush administration thinks that is a cost that we cannot afford or would unnecessarily impinge upon free commerce.

Then, of course, the technology, the technology that we don't have at the ports, to adequately scan these containers. Now, we cannot breathe a sigh of relief. Our ports are not yet secure. We depend upon a transmitted manifest. Now, I can just see that the Osama bin Laden line with the terrorist crew is going to send a manifest that says this container has 199 concrete bird baths and one small tactical nuclear weapon, and our intelligence people might even ask to open that container. Who knows, they might not. So we need to do a tremendous amount more.

Then there is another issue. The Bush administration, while Congress is away next week, is intending to put forward a rule that would allow foreign interests to control United States airlines in contravention of a very explicit law which prohibits control by foreign interests. The Bush Administration, using their inherent powers, has decided to reinterpret the meaning of the word control and say Congress just meant they can't control safety and security. We will wall that off.

How are you going to wall it off when you have foreign ownership of a U.S. airline, foreign management and a U.S. airline, foreign board of directors of a formerly U.S. airline, and you are going to wall off safety and security? Oh, come on, give me a break. As the chief operating officer of Continental said, hey, they are against this. They said, hey, I am head of safety, I am the COO, safety and security report to me. I can get someone to do whatever I want in that job, or I will fire them.

That is an extraordinary risk. It risks our civilian reserve air fleet, where we move our troops overseas. Just imagine a future deployment, say to maybe the Taiwan area with a problem with China, and the U.S. troops could be flying on an airline that was owned and controlled by Chinese communist government interests under this rule, which the Bush Administration wants to push through. Or it could be a UAE crew from Dubai, because they are the fastest expanding long-haul airline in the world, with all of their billions of surplus dollars.

We cannot rest easy, because the Bush Administration is continuing to dismantle critical infrastructure. We need a general review of critical infrastructure in this country, and we need to safeguard it. They are saying, no, we shouldn't do that. They are hoping to put the Dubai deal off, you know, and that we will not pay any attention to the threats at our ports or the threats

to our airlines and aviation industry, or maybe even under the Bush administration, we will sell our nuclear plants to foreign interests.

Wouldn't that be spiffy if we allowed foreign interests to own our nuclear plants? That would be really, really great for security here in the United States of America. America should not be for sale. It is a symptom of a failed trade policy, and this Bush administration just wants to do more of the same. It is time for change. It is time for new trade policy. It is time to keep bringing jobs home. It is time to make America secure, and it is time to secure our assets.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DREIER addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMARKS ON THE IRISH PEACE PROCESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise this evening as we approach the St. Patrick's Day recess to remind this body of the continued struggle for peace and justice in the North of Ireland. For many in America of Irish ancestry, this is a time of celebration, as it should be. However, we must also recognize that the fight for freedom and equality on the island of Ireland is still being waged.

Tonight I want to remember and commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Easter Uprising and the proclamation of an Irish Republic at the General Post Office in 1916. The brave men and women who took up arms against England vowed to fight for religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities for all Irish citizens.

This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the deaths of 10 brave men who died on a hunger strike in Long Kesh. Their courage and that of the women of Armagh inspired countless individuals and made the world take notice of the cruel and discriminatory policies of the British government in the North of Ireland. Their sacrifice proved the shortsightedness of a British policy criminalization.

Madam Speaker, I had the opportunity today to meet once again with Gerry Adams, whom I admire so much, for his continued determination to educate the Members of Congress about the situation in Northern Ireland. Because of the sacrifice of so many dedicated individuals like Gerry Adams over the years, we have seen great strides on the quest for an Ireland of equals.

The historic ceasefire by the IRA in 1994, followed by the Good Friday accords signed in 1998, created tremendous progression in the north. The

IRA's recent decision to lay down their weapons and pursue exclusively peaceful means toward the goal of a united Ireland is yet another hopeful sign.

However there still remains much to be done. The Good Friday agreement must be implemented in full. Any attempt to walk away from the institutions set forth in the agreement or substitute them with something less is a mistake. It is designed to placate extremists who want to fight progress and maintain their superiority. This simply cannot be allowed to stand.

Responsible leaders on all sides and on all parties must recognize that a quality in progress is inevitable and give the people of Northern Ireland the democracy that they deserve now.

Madam Speaker, I have consistently called for the full implementation of the Patten recommendations on policing because I believe true peace cannot exist without justice. This will not happen until there is a fair and impartial police service representative of all the communities in the North.

A dismantling of the British war machine in towns like South Armagh and Crossmaglen need to happen now so that residents there can live in peace and without fear of violence from a government supposedly there to protect them.

With a history of collusion between the RUC and loyalists paramilitaries, a full, complete and independent inquiry must also be done into if death of Pat Finucan, murdered by paramilitaries in front of his young family.

Madam Speaker, 25 years ago, as Bobby Sands sat in his cell on a hunger strike, he wrote in his diary, and I quote, if they aren't able to destroy the desire for freedom, they won't break you. They won't break me, because the desire for freedom and the freedom of the Irish people is in my heart. The day will dawn when all the people of Ireland will have the desire for freedom to show.

Madam Speaker, the British and Irish governments must recognize that the desire for freedom is as strong today as it ever was, and it will not be destroyed. The historic moves by the IRA and the electoral gains made by Sinn Fein are evidence of this desire. People will simply not tolerate a return to the conditions that have plagued the North for so many years.

PROTECTING THE CROWN JEWEL OF AMERICA'S SPACE PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Madam Speaker, last week was one of extraordinary triumph for the Nation's space program. On Thursday, NASA announced that the Cassini spacecraft may have found evidence of liquid water reservoirs that erupt in Yellowstone-Like geysers on Saturn's moon Enceladus. This stunning announcement was followed the next day by the successful orbital in-

sertion of the Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter around the Red Planet.

I stand before the House today to celebrate these incredible technological achievements and wondrous scientific discoveries, but most of all, to honor those who made it possible, the men and women of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

JPL, which is managed for NASA by the California Institute of Technology, has designed, built and controlled many of America's most successful unmanned space craft. JPL has pioneered our exploration of space from Explorer 1, America's first satellite, to Ranger and Surveyor craft that paved the way for Apollo to the Voyager spacecraft that explore the outer planets and are still continuing to send back data even as they leave our solar system.

JPL missions have increased our comprehension beyond anything even contemplated half a century ago. Every American space probe that has visited another body our solar system was managed by JPL. Through the wonders of technology, we have circled Jupiter with Galileo, sampled a comet with Stardust and rolled across the surface of Mars with spirit and opportunity. Cassini, which has been orbiting Saturn for just over 18 months, has transmitted stunning photographs and invaluable data on Saturn and its moons, while the Mar's Reconnaissance Orbiter, which will begin its science mission later this year, is expected to transmit more information about Mars than all of our previous Mars missions combined.

□ 1900

JPL's spectacular missions have not only brought us incalculable scientific data; they have also sustained America's interest in space flight, especially the Mars missions.

Now, as NASA prepares to accelerate the development of the Crew Exploration Vehicle and moves forward with plans to return humans to the Moon, the space agency and Congress must take care to continue to provide adequate resources to support the robotic exploration of space that is JPL's specialty.

Over the past months, NASA has worked to put into place a comprehensive program aimed at realizing the President's goal of landing an American on Mars. This is an ambitious and worthy goal, but the technological and physiological challenges, not to mention the cost, mean that it may be decades before an American walks on the Martian surface.

In the interim, we can continue to explore the Red Planet and our neighbors with relatively inexpensive probes that are better equipped than humans to survive the extreme hardship of long-duration space travel.

Madam Speaker, as we consider the future of our space program, I urge NASA and my colleagues not to deprive JPL, one of the crown jewels of American science and technology, of

adequate resources. The Mars program is one of the centerpieces of JPL's focus and the lab has several exciting missions planned for the next couple decades.

But even as JPL unlocks the secrets of our planetary neighbors, it is poised to begin an ambitious search for habitable worlds around the stars, a search that will help to answer one of humankind's oldest questions: Are we alone in the universe?

SIM PlanetQuest scheduled for launch in the middle of the next decade will precisely determine the distances to stars throughout our galaxy and will probe nearby stars for Earth-sized planets. SIM will open a window to a new world of discoveries.

The Mars program and SIM PlanetQuest are ambitious and resource-intensive missions with long lead times. JPL has also been a leading NASA center for the Explorer that in the past has offered opportunities to carry out small and medium-sized missions that can be developed and launched in a short timeframe.

The Explorer program engages academia, industry, NASA centers and government labs in strong partnerships that provide young engineers, scientists, and managers the opportunity to develop and gain valuable experience on missions from inception to launch.

Unfortunately, as a result of budget cuts over the last few years, this important program is quietly being phased out. But I believe that we must consider the significant and damaging effect this will have on NASA's scientific and technological program.

I am especially concerned about the recent decision to terminate the NuSTAR mission before its interim confirmation review. This action will have permanent damaging consequences as it is causing the scientific community as well as industry to question the reliability of NASA as a partner and the wisdom of investing internal resources in the proposal development process.

The termination calls NASA's commitment to the peer review selection process into serious question and illustrates, in my view, a lack of appreciation of the serious investment made by the team at NASA to date.

While I understand that NASA is facing difficult budgetary decisions, the priorities must be set, it would be a severe blow to NASA science to allow such a low-cost, productive, and unique program like Explorers to be so severely cut. In particular the unprecedented action taken with NuSTAR will have lasting consequences for all future competed missions.

Madam Speaker, the decisions we make this year will have profound implications for the future of America's space program. Even as we celebrate JPL's most recent successes, I urge NASA and my colleagues to work to ensure JPL's leadership in exploring our solar system and the Universe beyond.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. DRAKE). Under a previous order of the